FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

25 MARCH 1987

Iran and the Gulf

There is nothing genuine about the U.S. "hue and cry" over Iran's deployment of land-based antiship missiles near the Strait of Hormuz, Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani declared in an interview broadcast by Tehran radio. He said the Iranians do not know why the United States is raising this issue now because Iran has deployed such missiles on its coast for a long time, and if the Americans did not know this until now, "this is a sign of their excessive weakness." Noting that Iran recently rejected a U.S. warning on the missile issue, the Majlis speaker contended that the United States has "no legitimate presence" in the Gulf, while Iran is "more interested in the security of the Strait of Hormuz than others." If Iran wanted to close the Strait it would not need missiles as artillery would be sufficient, he added.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani also denied reports that Iran has put two listening stations at the disposal of the Soviet Union in exchange for 200 Soviet missiles, viewing this as an "insinuation by the imperialists." Neither the Soviet Union nor any other foreign power has "even the smallest center" or facility in Iran, he said, and Iran has "no need" for Soviet missiles as "we have been a missile power in the region for a long time."

In another development, the head of Iran's delegation to a UN conference on atomic power warned that a military strike against Iran's unfinished reactor at Bushehr could have "the same radioactive consequences" as the accident at Chernobyl, AFP reported. The Iranian official disclosed that "nuclear matter" is stockpiled at the plant.

Chadian Conflict

Chadian forces killed 1,269 Libyans and took 438 prisoners during the capture of Ouadi Doum 22 March, according to a Chadian military communique carried by Ndjamena radio. On the Chadian side only 29 soldiers were reported killed and 58 wounded. Among the weapons captured at Ouadi Doum were 11 L-39 bombers, 12 T-62 and 42 T-55 tanks, and 12 SAM-6 and 4 SAM-10 batteries, the communique said. The army also reported equipment destroyed, which included 2 TU-22 bombers, 1 MiG-21, and 47 T-55 tanks.

According to Tripoli television, however, GUNT forces "crushed" the attack on Ouadi Doum. Reports on the "imaginary victories" are part of a "vindictive and heated propaganda campaign" by the media against GUNT, the television said.

In continued fighting, GUNT claimed its commandos "infiltrated south of the 16th parallel" and attacked Iriba District on 23 March, AFP reported citing the GUNT foreign minister. The assault killed 25 Chadian soldiers, the minister said, adding that clashes continue in the Ouadi Doum area.

Meanwhile, JANA's political editor claimed that France has violated its promises and is fighting north of the 16th parallel. The action is in line with a "secret agreement" with Hissein Habre to "liberate" northern Chad, the editor maintained.

DRA-Pakistan

Pakistan lodged a "strong" protest with the Afghan charge over the DRA's 23 March "deliberately provocative attacks" on Kurram and Waziristan Agencies, Karachi radio reported.

On the other hand, Haji Mohammad Chamkani, president of the DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium, greeted President Ziaul Haq on Pakistan's national day, Kabul radio reported. Chamkani sent "warm congratulations" and expressed "hope for the future development of bilateral relations," the radio disclosed.

Lebanon

Hostages — The Organization of Revolutionary Justice announced that it has not postponed or cancelled the "death sentence" on French hostage Jean-Louis Normandin, who is currently being tried for a second time. The ORJ issued this information in a communique to a local newspaper, accompanied by a photograph of Normandin, AFP reported. Meanwhile, the UAE paper *Al-Khalij* cited claims that the Syrians have located the whereabouts of the four hostages kidnapped 24 January and are planning to release them before the end of March, QNA noted.

Attacks on SLA — The SLA repelled "a large terrorist offensive" in the Jabal al-Safhah area of southeastern Lebanon 24 March, IDF radio reported. Beirut radio stated that Lebanese resistance fighters killed over 15 "enemy agents" in an attack at Yarin, a southwestern village near the Israeli border.

Algeria

House Arrest Lifted — At least 22 persons, including a former minister under President Ahmed Ben Bella, were released from house arrest on 24 March, Paris radio reported. The move follows an appeal to President Chadli Bendjedid by leading lawyers, AFP noted.

Agreement With Spain — Spain and Algeria have affirmed they will not allow activity on their territory which might threaten the security of either country, Madrid radio reported citing official Spanish sources. Algeria will not become a sanctuary for ETA members and in exchange Spain will "keep checks" on Algerian opposition members who support Ben Bella, the radio said.

Saudi King's UK Visit

King Fahd urged the United Kingdom to take a more positive role in finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue, London *Press Association* disclosed in a report on the Saudi ruler's banquet speech at Buckingham Palace.

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Revolutionary Council President Greets Ziaul Haq
LD241738 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Haji Mohammad Chamkani, president of the DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium, sent the following message to Islamabad, addressed to the president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan's national day:

His Excellency General Ziaul Haq, president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

I am delighted to present my warm congratulations to your excellency and through your excellency to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan's national day.

Taking this opportunity I would like to express hope for the future development of bilateral relations in the interest of the people of the two countries, and for peace and stability in the region and in the world.

[Signed] Haji Mohammad Chamkani, president of the DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium

Paghman Mujahidin Reach Ceasefire Agreement
BK241518 Hong Kong AFP in English 1436 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Islamabad, March 24 (AFP) — Most mujahidin in the northern Paghman region have reached an informal ceasefire agreement with the Afghan Army's local command, Western diplomats said here Tuesday.

The sources did not give total of the mujahidin force which entered into a truce. The Afghan rebel parties based in Iran and Pakistan earlier collectively rejected Afghan leader Najibullah's six month unilateral ceasefire offer of last January 1. The offer was aimed at reaching a national reconciliation to enable the Soviet troops to withdraw and a national unity government with the Kabul regime's opponents to be set up.

This is the first time after the reported failure of the regime's call that a mujahidin force of relatively volatile region has agreed to suspend fighting. Paghman, 25 kms (15 miles) from Kabul, witnessed some of the most devastating fighting last year.

While guerrillas in Paghman were entering a truce, the northern region's commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's forces rocketed Soviet territory from Afghanistan, Western diplomats said. The diplomats said Mas'ud's men fired a number of rockets across the Amu Darya (Oxus River) which forms the Soviet Afghan boundary. But they did not specify the locations and losses if any in the Soviet territory.

Guerrilla sources who in the past also claimed to have crossed Oxus River said the mujahidin under the command of Amir Ghulam of rebels Harakat-e Enqelabi attacked Soviet territory from Emam Saheb village in Konduz last week.

The rocketing damaged Soviet barracks resulting in 12 casualties. The Russians in retaliation dropped thousands of paratroops in Shah Ravan and Dasht-e Archi, blocking the guerrillas' exit. Some 22 mujahidin have been killed in face to face fighting while rebel commander Amir Ghulam was also wounded, the rebel-run *Afghan Islamic Press* (AIP) said. Fighting was continuing in the area, it added.

Diplomats had no such details, but quoting consistently reliable sources they said that fully-equipped Soviet forces were crossing into Afghanistan from Heratan port.

They said the mujahidin rate of downing Afghan aircraft steped up this month and guerrillas in Nangarhar Province shot down three helicopters in a single-day operation last week.

AIP said rebels shot down two helicopters near Gardeyz Monday, killing 27 people including five Russians on board. It said mujahidin also captured two Afghan Army posts near their base Jhawar and took 40 Afghan troops captive Monday.

Meanwhile the diplomats said Afghan television last week showed a "highly unusual" 45-minute film which included "bland" but non- critical references to exiled King Zahir Shah, prompting speculations that the regime may be rehabilitating the monarchy, the diplomats observed.

Mujahidin Shoot Down Plane, Helicopter Gunship
LD241942 Tehran IRNA in English 1700 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., March 24, IRNA — Afghan Muslim revolutionaries shot down a warplane and helicopter gunship of the Soviet-Afghan forces over the past two weeks, announced Afghan sources here.

Fifteen Soviet-Afghan forces were killed and wounded when Afghan mujahidin attacked their positions in Shekiban, Herat Province on the occasion of the anniversary of the Kabul uprising against the puppet regime on March 16. One Afghan mujahid was martyred and another wounded in the operations.

Kabul Carries Decree on Returnees Tax Exemption
LD242255 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Decree No 322 of the DRA Revolutionary Council concerns the writing off of tax on land, shops, private trade, companies, rents of government shops, and the respective fines owed by the returnees.

The Revolutionary Council Presidium in accordance with Article 44 of the DRA Basic Principles and the statement of the extraordinary session of the DRA Revolutionary Council dated 13 Jadi 1365 [3 Jan 1987] approves the following:

Article I. The subjects of the DRA who return to the country following the process of national reconciliation are exempted from taxes in the following categories mentioned in this article owed by them including the fine arising from delayed payment from the time of emigration until the date of return provided their

return to the country is certified by the department in charge of compatriots' return:

1. Tax pertaining to guilds including the respective fine in the event of shop closure.

2. Tax on private trade and the fine for late payment, during the period after the date of emigration provided its respective license has not been used.

3. Tax and the fine for late payment owed by those companies and commercial and industrial enterprises whose chairman or shareholders after emigration did not apply for a new license or did not conduct any business.

4. Tax and the fine for late payment on motor vehicles and the fine on drivers licenses and traffic licenses provided these vehicles remained idle and their traffic license had not been renewed in its specified period.

5. Tax on rented immovable property and the fine for late payment.

6. Tax and the fine on payment delay owed by companies that were nationalized or taken over by the government as security or those companies that became idle due to the absence of the owner or owners from the date of nationalization or when taken as security [as heard].

7. Tax on water [two words indistinct] machines of oil extraction, ginning, sugar-cane and cotton as well as the fine on delayed payment.

Article II. The DRA subjects who under the national reconciliation process return to the homeland, provided their return is certified by the department in charge of the return affairs of the compatriots, are being exempted from the payment of land tax and its fine owed by them from the date of emigration until 1 year after their return.

Article III. The subjects of the DRA who under the national reconciliation process return to the homeland, if their return is certified by the department in charge of the return affairs of the compatriots, are being exempted from the payment of lease charges on government land and the respective fines owed by them from the date of emigration to the return date.

Article IV. The DRA subjects who return to the country under the national reconciliation process, if their return is certified by the department in charge of the return affairs of compatriots, are exempted from the payment of rent on shops owned by the government and rented to them if these shops remained closed during the period of the returnee's emigration, from the date of emigration to the date of return.

Article V. Companies and commercial and industrial enterprises will be restituted to their owners who return to the homeland as a result of the national reconciliation process and have their return certified by the department in charge of the return affairs of the compatriots; in the event of being taken as security the sum of money embodied in the security will be taken as an installment.

Article VI. The DRA Council of Ministers is commissioned to apply this decree in practice.

Article VII. This decree applies to those returnees who had emigrated prior to the announcement of national reconciliation that is to say 25 Jadi 1365 [15 Jan 1987].

Article VIII. This decree comes into force from date of its approval and will be published in the official gazette.

Signed: Haji Mohammad Chamkani, acting president of the DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium

Indian Press Reports on Chakmas 'Baseless'

BK231305 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] A Foreign Office statement in Dhaka today described the recent spate of articles in the Indian press on Bangladeshi Chakmas as baseless and motivated. The statement categorically said complete tranquility and peace prevail in the area and tribal communities in the area, including Chakmas, are living in complete harmony, freely participating in the development process in the country.

It must be recalled that some members of the tribal communities crossed the border and this was caused by panic created by armed miscreants who have their base elsewhere and also as a result of false and malicious propaganda. The government has made it clear time and again that all Bangladeshi nationals who might have crossed the border can return home with safety and security. The government has taken all measures for their speedy repatriation.

If further said that at a time when such efforts are under way, publication of motivated and baseless articles is most unfortunate.

AFP: Police Open Fire on Protesters; Kill 1

BK250515 Hong Kong AFP in English 0447 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] Dhaka, March 25 (AFP) — Railway police opened fire on student protesters armed with home-made bombs, killing one and injuring nine, at a northern Bangladesh railway station, railway officials here said.

The railway police opened fire Tuesday after an "unruly mob' of students armed with home-made bombs and other weapons attacked a magistrate who had earlier headed a mobile court investigating passengers who had travelled on a mail train without tickets, the officials said. The protesters also set fire to a police vehicle, forcing police to open fire, officials said.

The protesters were reportedly demanding the release of several students who had been detained by the magistrate for travelling without tickets. The incident occurred at Gaffargoan station, about 60 miles (95 kilometers) north of Dhaka.

Press reports here Wednesday said that after news of the detention of the students spread, students from nearby schools and colleges mobbed the station and later ransacked the office of the magistrate.

AFP: Students Stage Antigovernment Protest

BK211710 Hong Kong AFP in English 1632 GMT 21 Mar 87

[Text] Dhaka, March (AFP) — Police arrested one person Saturday after more than 200 students staged a protest in downtown Dhaka against the government of Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, witnesses said.

An 18-year-old man was arrested after a group of student demonstrators stoned and damaged an Air Force jeep near the campus of Dhaka University, the witnesses said. They said the demonstrators attacked the jeep and broke its windshield as they were returning to campus following the protest.

Witnesses said the driver and a junior Air Force man were manhandled before riot police arrived

8,000 Youths Fought for PLO; 400 Killed

BK180635 Dhaka BSS in English 0615 GMT 18 Mar 87

[Text] Dhaka, March 18 (BSS) — Bangladesh Foreign Minister Humayun Rashid Chowdhury told the Parliament yesterday that 8,000 Bangladeshi youths had volunteered their services for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in its fight against Israel.

He also said that of them 400 Bangladeshi fighters had embraced martyrdom.

About repatriation of these fighters, the foreign minister said that in all 945 of them returned to Bangladesh through the help of International Red Cross on November 15, 1982.

Strike of Food Department Employees Banned

BK221722 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 22 Mar 87

[Text] The government has banned the strike of the officers and employees under the Directorate of Food with immediate effect. An official handout in Dhaka today said the measure has been taken to (?maintain) discipline and uninterrupted necessary service to the public.

Gandhi To Meet Pakistan's Nuclear 'Threat'

BK241621 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] The prime minister has reiterated that India would make an appropriate response to Pakistan's reported move to acquire nuclear weapons. Addressing a news conference in Sriharikota today Mr Rajiv Gandhi said that he intends meeting President Zia's threat and the Indian people will not be found wanting. Mr Gandhi declined to elaborate. He said he had made an observation on India's response to Pakistan's nuclear move in Parliament earlier.

On Sri Lanka, Mr Gandhi said India's stand is firm and he told President Jayewardene that any settlement to the ethnic problems should be just to the Tamils. He said he believes that Sri Lanka is still holding on to the December 19 proposal to resolve the issue.

Delhi Updates West Bengal, Kerala State Polls

BK250334 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Excerpts] In the assembly elections to the three states, the Left Front in West Bengal, headed by the CPI-M, is well ahead of the Congress-I and others in the results available so far. In Kerala, the CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front [LDF] has wrested power from the Congress-I-led United Democratic Front [UDF]. The National Conference-Congress-I alliance in Jammu and Kashmir is all set to gain a majority.

In West Bengal, the Left Front has won 84 out of the 105, the results of which have been declared. Among the noted winners are the Public Works Department minister, Mr Jatin Chakraborty of the RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party]; the speaker of the assembly, Mr Hashim Abdul Halim, CPI-M; and the former union minister, Mr D.P. Chattopadhay of the Congress-I. The minister of state for excise, Mr Bimalananda Mukherjee, independent, has bagged the Santipur seat. Other winners include Mr Nurul Islam Chowdhury of the Congress-I, Mr Niranjan Mukherjee, Mr Lakshmikanta Dey, Mr Sachin Sen, and Mr Narain Hazra — all CPI-M. [passage omitted]

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress-I-National Conference alliance is only two seats away from an absolute majority. Out of the 42 results declared so far, the alliance has bagged 37. Individually, the National Conference-F has won 22 seats and the Congress-I 15. [passage omitted on other details]

The Kerala CPI-M State Secretariat is meeting in Trivandrum this morning to elect its new leader. The LDF state committee is to meet later today to discuss the formation of the new government. Our Trivandrum correspondent understands that the new ministry will be sworn in tomorrow.

The Kerala chief minister, Mr Karunakaran, has said the UDF defeat in the state assembly elections was due to disunity and infighting among its partners. Speaking to newsmen in Trivandrum, he maintained that the verdict is not a reflection of the performance of his government. He said he would tender his resignation soon. [passage omitted]

Here is the latest party position in West Bengal: Results declared-113; Left Front-93; CPI-M-70, CPI-1, Forward Bloc-15, RSP-5, Left Front independents-2; Congress-I 20, and Muslim League-1. [figures as heard].

Further Details

BK250911 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Excerpt] The ruling Left Front in West Bengal and the Congress-I-National Conference-Farooq alliance in Jammu and Kashmir have been voted back to power. After winning absolute majority in the assembly elections, both the alliances are now surging ahead to gain two-third majority. Of the 178 results available from West Bengal, the CPI-M led left front has bagged 151, 3 more than required for getting absolute majority. Of this CPI-M has bagged 114, CPI 4, Forward Block 18, Revolutionary Socialist Party 11, and Left Front supported independents 4. The Congress-I has got 26 seats and the Muslim League 1. The Left Front needs only 46 seats to gain two-third majority with 116 results yet to come in.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress-I-National Conference-Farooq alliance has gained 38 seats out of 43 results declared so far. The National Conference-Farooq has accounted for 23 and the Congress-I 15. The alliance conceded only 5 seats to others so far with 30 more results yet to come in. The Bhartiya Janata Party has got 2 and independents 3. Muslim Conference has so far drawn blank. [passage omitted on results from various constituencies]

Minister Comments on Failure of Rocket Launch

BK250907 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] Preliminary analyses of yesterday's first ASLV [Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle] mission indicates that the vehicle seems to have lost control due to a suspected malfunction of the motor after 163 seconds. Disclosing this, the minister for science and technology, Mr K.R. Narayanan, told in the Lok Sabha today that the performance of the vehicle was normal up to 48.5 seconds. Telemetry data was received throughout the flight duration. The minister said that of the two important new technologies incorporated in ASLV, the strap-on booster technology has performed quite satisfactorily.

Tamil Nadu Official Discusses Sri Lankan Refugees

BK201021 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 20 Mar 87

[Text] The Tamil Nadu finance minister, Mr V. R. Nedunchezhiyan, has said the state government is incurring massive expenditure in providing relief to the Sri Lankan refugees. About 40 million rupees have already been spent for constructing houses for them. Speaking in the assembly today, he urged the union

government to exert pressure on Colombo to stop all military action and take measures to prevent further deterioration of the ethnic crisis in the island. Welcoming the efforts made in this direction by the center, he said urgent steps are needed to ensure that the lot of the Sri Lankan Tamils does not worsen. Mr Nedunchezhiyan said atrocities on Tamils in Jaffna peninsula continue with unabated fury. They are facing starvation and death owing to the blockade imposed by the Sri Lankan Government.

1 Killed as Gurkha, Marxist Supporters Clash

BK250344 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] In Darjeeling, 1 person was shot dead and over 10 were injured in clashes between GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] and CPI-M supporters at (Sidrabong) yesterday. The trouble broke out when the GNLF were taking out a procession. Meanwhile, the GNLF has withdrawn its 1-month-long alternate day bundh [strike] in the hill areas of Darjeeling.

NEPAL

AFP: Police Fire on Crowd in Election Disorder

BK241536 Hong Kong AFP in English 1510 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Katmandu, March 24 (AFP) — Police opened fire on a crowd trying to disrupt polling, and factional fighting was reported in some areas during Nepalese local elections Tuesday, official sources said.

The banned Nepali Congress Party said that several people had sustained bullet wounds, but an official source said that no casualties were reported.

Police opened fire to disperse a crowd who had tried to disrupt polling in Dharan and Dhankuta Districts and polling was disturbed in some areas because of factional fighting, official sources said.

A heavy turnout was reported despite the scattered reports of violence, as voters went to the polls in seven towns and 1,600 villages in central and eastern Nepal for local panchayat (assembly) elections, the sources said.

Competition was tough in Taulihawa municipality, a stronghold of the banned Nepali Congress.

Partisan politics are not allowed under Nepal's 25-year-old partyless panchayat system, but the congress is campaigning on partisan lines in these elections for the first time.

The local polls are being held in phases, and the Nepali Congress charged Monday that there had been massive rigging of voting in the first stage Saturday. A spokesman for the Panchayat Policy and Evaluation Committee (PPEC) categorically denied the allegations that there had been rigging in Saturday's polling, which covered about 2,000 villages and 10 town panchayats. The PPEC had strictly instructed district administrations and returning officers to be fair in the elections and had told them that there should not be any kind of favouritism or nepotism to any person or groups, whether the panchayat group or banned party groups, the spokesman said. "One might win or lose the election but when one loses no false allegation of rigging should be made," he added.

The Nepali Congress had lost badly in the majority of places and was therefore alleging vote rigging. "It is in reality not a democratic spirit," the spokesman said.

A third phase of the elections is to be held April 3 and the final stage, covering the border districts in the north, will be held in May.

SRI LANKA

Separatists Propose Tamil-Soldier Exchange

BK250603 Hong Kong AFP in English 0532 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] Colombo, March 25 (AFP) — Tamil separatists want to exchange eight captured government men for separatists held by the government, well-informed sources said Wednesday. The five soldiers and three policemen were captured during an attack by separatists Sunday on a security forces camp in the Jaffna peninsula, the sources said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the strongest separatist group campaigning for an independent homeland in the north and east, are likely to demand the release of 20 LTTE cadres held by the government, sources said citing news received from Jaffna. The LTTE has posted the names of the captured government men on a notice board in Jaffna, sources said.

The Cabinet is expected to discuss this new development and a LTTE attack on a village in the northeast Monday during a Cabinet meeting Wednesday, informed sources said. The death toll in the attack, which had been given as 26, has risen to 27, they added.

Government sources said that the government had not received any demands by the LTTE for the release of its colleagues in exchange for the captured security personnel.

Late last year the government released two LTTE detainees, including an Eastern Province LTTE leader, in exchange for two soldiers captured by the separatists more than two months earlier during heavy fighting in Adampan, in the northwestern Mannar region. National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said it was not a prisoner exchange but that the government was responding to the LTTE's gesture of releasing the soldiers. The release was arranged through indirect contacts between the government and the LTTE involving a Tamil businessman from the north who acted as a mediator.

Observers believe that India may put some pressure on the LTTE to release the soldiers, as New Delhi is preparing to resume its mediatory role in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, which claimed more than 5,000 lives in the past year.

'Terrorists' Launch 'Dawn Attack' in Jaffna

BK241126 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Five soldiers were killed, 13 injured, and 8 taken hostage by Tiger terrorists after they launched a dawn attack on a security forces position outside their camp in old Dutch Fort in Jaffna. The attacks on the buildings at Pannai, (?former) police quarters and now held by security forces after they occupied extended areas to prevent mortar attacks into the fort, came during a night-long offensive the terrorists had launched. From Sunday evening, they pounded the fort camp, neighboring positions at the telecommunications building, and other [words indistinct]. As this went on, terrorists armed with rifles and grenades

had broken into the Pannai quarters building. In the bitter battle that ensued, five soldiers were killed. Most of the injuries to soldiers have come from mortars that exploded inside camp area. Two soldiers who were seriously wounded were air lifted to Colombo by Sri Lanka Air Force helicopters. Ten others were flown by military aircraft, while one is said to have sustained minor injury.

The fate of the eight soldiers, who had been taken hostage, is unknown. General Cyril Ranatunge, general officer commanding joint operations command of security forces, flew into Jaffna yesterday. He was at the fort camp making a study of how the incident had occurred.

'Terrorists' Reportedly Massacre Villagers

BK231424 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
1230 GMT 23 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 23 (LANKA PUWATH) — First official reports reaching Colombo state that terrorists massacred 21 villagers yesterday in the remote village of Serunawewa, Ihorocwapatana in north central Sri Lanka. [Hong Kong AFP in English at 1405 GMT on 23 March in a similar report adds the following: "Suspected Tamil separatists murdered 26 people in a dawn attack on a predominantly Sinhala village in northeastern [as received] Sri Lanka Monday, the official media centre said.

"The attackers were armed with machine guns, swords, and large knives when they invaded the jungle village of Serunawewa in the northeastern Trincomalee District some 256 kilometers (160 miles) from Colombo, the Media Centre said.

"The suspected Tamil separatists were challenged by three or four home guards armed with shotguns, but overpowered them.

"The group attacked sleeping women and children before fleeing into the jungle, the Media Centre said.

"A total of 26 people were shot dead or slaughtered with swords and knives, it added."]

'Sources' Deny Food Shortage in Jaffna

BK220915 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
0806 GMT 22 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool"]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 22 (LANKA PUWATH) — Although the Eelam lobby both in Sri Lanka and abroad is spreading false rumours of food scarcities in Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, there are ample stocks of food available, official sources told LANKA PUWATH.

They said that with the last replenishments of food dispatched to Jaffna from Colombo on March 15, the food department warehouse at Kankesanthurai [KKS] (Jaffna) had stocks sufficient for four to seven weeks.

The official sources said the KKS warehouse was stocked with 3881 tons of rice, 4486 tons of flour, and 1215 tons of sugar.

The food department [words indistinct] extremely troubled periods has been sending the essential food requirements such as rice, flour, and sugar to Jaffna. Weekly requirements of these three items by the Jaffna population of 830,000 is 500 metric tons of rice, 844 tons of flour, and 300 tons of sugar.

Unfortunately, the food department is only left with one warehouse as those in Jaffna town, Point Pedro, Navatkuli, and Kayts have been damaged by terrorists or are not functioning due to problems of terrorism.

The official sources said food supplies are being sent by coastal ships (freighters) from Colombo and Trincomalee.

The additional expenses of port dues, freight charges, and stevedoring are absorbed by the food department.

Hence prices of items to Jaffna consumers are the same as those for consumers in Colombo.

Consignments of food shipped to KKS are being distributed by trucks belonging to cooperative societies and sufficient stocks of fuel were issued for food distribution in Jaffna even during the period the fuel embargo was in force.

The official sources said these hard facts effectively shoot down the cannard spread by the Eelam lobby supported by some Indian newspapers and Indian political parties about an economic embargo imposed by the Sri Lanka Government on the people of the Jaffna peninsula.

LANKA PUWATH Reports 'Terrorist' Incidents

BK231031 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
0930 GMT 23 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 23 (LANKA PUWATH) — Four security forces personnel were killed as a result of a mortar attack by separatist terrorists at the Jaffna Fort in nothern Sri Lanka last night, the Media Centre in Colombo told LANKA PUWATH today.

Several servicemen were reported missing after the attack on the Jaffna camp. The mortar fire also destroyed sentry posts near the Jaffna Fort and the chest clinic. The terrorists were shouting anti-Indian slogans and also that they want war and not peace, the Media Centre said.

In a separate incident yesterday morning one serviceman was killed and three others were wounded in a confrontation with a gang of terrorists in Medawachchiya in Trincomalee District eastern Sri Lanka yesterday.

In Kilinochchi three terrorists were killed and another was wounded when security forces raided a LTTE hideout yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Vasanthan, Meesai, and Vino, of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam gang.

The security forces later destroyed another terrorist hideout belonging to the EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] gang.

A number of cylinders, grenades, and claymore mines stored in the camp were also destroyed.

Terrorists fired mortars and small fires at the Navatkuli camp in Jaffna northern Sri Lanka from the direction of the Navatkuli housing scheme, Ariyalai, and the railway bridge; security forces retaliated with mortar fire. One security force personnel was slightly wounded.

Meanwhile, terrorists fired five mortars towards the guard house at the cement factory from Maviddapuram area, Kankesanthurai in northern Sri Lanka yesterday morning.

At Vasavilan, a security forces patrol killed two terrorists, yesterday morning.

In another operation at Kalliodi Madu, Batticaloa [word indistinct] evening security forces came across a LTTE hideout in a jungle. They [words indistincts] at the terrorists who fled in the face of security forces' fire.

Following items were recovered: one land rover (no number plate), two Mitsubishi jeeps (no number plate), 36 dynamite sticks, 6 kgs. of high explosives, two typewriters, one duplicating machine, one radio, one Honda c90 m.c., one pedal cycle, two pairs of boots, five car head lamps, six 36 Mills hand grenades, a large quantity of food items, one hood rack, six torch batteries, and quantity of motor spares.

EROS Members Suspected of Bombings Detained

BK210823 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
0701 GMT 21 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 21 (LANKA PUWATH) — The Criminal Investigation Department yesterday produced three members of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) gang of terrorists in connection with a series of bombings and attempted bombings in the city of Colombo and its suburbs, police told LANKA PUWATH today.

They are Kanagasabai Sabaratnam alias Henry alias Alexander, a leading member of EROS and described as a mastermind, Jabanayagam Sajathkhandran and Qiliqpu Pillai Petersingham.

The magistrate allowed the applications to have the suspects further detained.

Sabaratnam is alleged to have attempted to blow up the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation'as oil refinery, been involved in the time bomb explosion at the central telegraph office in Colombo Fort which killed 12 persons, several other bombings and attempted bombings.

He has been described by police a a terrorist mastermind concerning time bomb explosions.

The other two suspects were alleged to have been caught by police transporting a high velocity [as received] time bomb at the Kolonnawa oil installation, and placing time bombs at the central telegraph office, and a Ceylon Electricty Board sub-station at Colombo Fort.

902 Refugees Return Home From South India

BK231140 Colombo International Service in English
1045 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] Seventy-three Tamil refugees from south India — comprising 25 males, 25 females, and 23 children — returned to their homes in Mannar and other districts around 1400 on Friday [20 March]. Another 98 refugees — comprising 37 males, 27 females, and 34 children — returned from south India yesterday. According to the Media Center, during the last 15 days 902 refugees returned to Sri Lanka from south India.

Meanwhile, the Media Center said that around 0900 yesterday a booby trap set by terrorists behind (Virasingham) hall was activated either by accident or design and the rear portion of Regal Theater was seen to have been damaged.

Musavi Views U.S. Policy on Hormuz Strait

LD251318 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] The Cabinet held its first meeting of the new year this morning. During the session, Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi greeted the Cabinet members and the heroic nation on the occasion of the new year, honored the memory of the great martyrs of the Islamic Revolution, and explained the basic policy of the state for the new year. Mr Musavi said that during the year 1365 [ending on 20 March 87] We made gains in the economic, political, and military arena, and, by relying upon our principles and aspirations, we succeeded in moving closer to realizing our slogans. This was accomplished despite all the pressure exerted by the enemies of the Islamic Revolution, pressure that was beyond description.

Concerning the government's duty toward the war in the new year, the prime minister stressed: For the sake of pursuing the war until we achieve a complete victory, we should be better prepared than last year. Through extensive planning for the war, we should be able to mobilize all our resources and, with the help of Almighty God, we should be able to successfully shoulder this heavy burden.

Mr Musavi then added: Now that the United States has plans for us, we must rely more than ever on the unity, (?action), and stability of the forces within the country. Our other duty at this juncture is to be more seriously active in serving the deprived and oppressed as well as those harmed by the war. The more we work for this purpose, the more we need to work even harder.

On the basis of a report from the Central News Unit, Prime Minister Hoseyn Musavi, commenting at the conclusion of today's Cabinet session on the threatening remarks of U.S. officials about the Persian Gulf, said: In view of what has happened between Iran and the United States during the past 8 years, we expected the Yankees to behave cautiously when dealing with the Islamic Revolution. Of course, we know their motive behind these hollow threats. Reagan and his gang, who are being questioned by the U.S. legal system and public opinion for their countless violations, intend to use adventurism in the Persian Gulf as a means of distracting public attention from their own disgrace. We promise, however, that they will sink further into the quagmire of this fiasco and become even more disgraced over this hue and cry than at any other time.

Mr Musavi then further emphasized: We draw the attention of the world to this point, that Mr Reagan is sacrificing U.S. interests for his own personal gains. Therefore, should U.S. interests be harmed in any way from now on, Reagan should be blamed and not those interested in the blossoming of Islam in Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or other countries of the world.

The prime minister added: The United States should realize that the borders of the Islamic Revolution do not end in the Persian Gulf; this revolution has long arms to slap the United States in all parts of the world.

Mr Musavi went on: After conquering Al-Faw, we officially announced our capability of using land-based antiship missiles; the fact that the United States, after so much delay, is now panicking and expressing its concern, is because Reagan now needs this sensation. We also announce today that our war capabilities in the Persian Gulf are not limited to these missiles.

The prime minister emphasized: None of these missiles, together with other more effective missiles at our disposal, are more frightening to the United States than the danger posed by the will of an alert nation determined to make its own independent decisions and remain free and live in an Islamic fashion.

In reply to remarks made by the U.S. defense secretary who said: This country will resort to any measure necessary for safeguarding Persian Gulf shipping, Mr Musavi said: It is we who, in order to safeguard the region from the danger of the Great Satan and in order to prove its weakness and desperation, will resort to any action, even those actions that are not thought probable by Westerners, because the security of the Persian Gulf has nothing to do with the United States.

The prime minister emphasized: If the United States and its agents imagine that Iraq, by making use of their guidance and capabilities, can continue to attack our ships and our oil installations and that the Persian Gulf will still retain its security for the export of oil, they are mistaken. Against any blow we will undoubtedly deliver reciprocal blows.

Addressing some countries of the region that invite the aliens to intervene in the Persian Gulf, the prime minister said: We advise them not to take big risks against their own fate, for the United States will, under any circumstances, leave the region in disgrace, and they will send other McFarlanes to us with signed Bibles. They should realize that the might of the United States is nothing vis-a-vis Islam; if the United States was capable, it would have protected the shah.

On the basis of the same report, during today's Cabinet session the governor of the Central Bank, Mr Qasemi, presented a report to the government on last year's achievements in the banking system and the monetary and credit policies for the year 1366 [current year]. After some debate, the report was ratified following the addition of various amendments.

U.S. Falls From Superpower to 'Untrustworthy Ally'

LD251445 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1117 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Unattributed political commentary]

[Text] The presence of a few U.S. warships in the region has been at the top of reports and propaganda of Western media during the past few days. The attempts of Western radios and publications to give extensive coverage to the reports, comments, and reactions to this deployment has made it into one of the most important issues attracting public attention throughout the world.

In an interview yesterday, Hashemi-Rafsanjani described the presence of the U.S. fleet in the region and the accompanying propaganda as a sign of American desperation. He said: I think that in order to make up for that blow delivered to the United States' prestige, it is now raising this hue and cry saying that it is the supporter of Arab reactionaries.

According to many political analysts that blow to U.S. diplomacy in the important and strategic region of the Middle East has been of such great importance that it will not be repaired in the near future. What was regarded as the winning card of U.S. diplomacy in the region was that country's relations with Arab reactionaries as well as with Israel and its ability to attract the trust of both sides. However, the United States' attempts to establish political relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran have placed that country's long-term, conspiratorial plans into a state of suspension.

This issue, creating a temporary vacuum in the exercise of diplomacy in the region, has provided an opportunity for the Soviet Union to play games and has also made it possible for Western Europe to have a more active diplomatic presence in the region. What was the main axis of the suspended U.S. diplomacy in the region was an attempt based upon the common interests of the regime occupying Jerusalem and the reactionary Arab leaders, namely efforts to weaken the revolutionary forces in the region. This was so the United States, while preventing danger for the occupiers of Jerusalem and the reactionary Arab leaders, could also make the climate of the region more hospitable to the achievement of a political compromise.

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the role this revolution played in deepening and expanding the revolutionary climate in the region, would naturally give rise to the expectation that the United States would not refrain from any attempt to isolate the Islamic Revolution and to weaken this country. In view of the threats reactionary Arab leaders felt to their own existence, they believed the United States to be a trustworthy supporter and guardian.

Under such conditions, the revelation of the United States' desire to establish relations with Iran — and that in such an absurd way revealing its desperation and political weakness — and emphasizing the fact that Iran's strategic position cannot be overlooked by the United States, naturally changed the United States' standing from a superpower to that of a shaky, weak, and untrustworthy ally. All of a sudden, the reactionary Arab leaders felt themselves totally exposed and defenseless.

One of the earliest reactions to this irreparable defeat was the anger and bewilderment of King Husayn and Husni Mubarak, who postponed their trips to the United States for following up their political discussions on what has been called peace in the Middle East.

Under such conditions, the only thing that could be done by the American leaders was to make repeated visits to the region and to have discussions with the rulers of those countries in order to explain what had happened. Among these visits was the trip by high-ranking U.S. military figures to the shaykhdoms in the Persian Gulf region in which they promised to sell advanced weapons. In order to add further credence to these efforts, they raised an extensive propaganda hue and cry about the stationing of missiles by Iran in the Strait of Hormuz — which had been done a long time ago. By dispatching their warships to the region they suggested that Kuwait should ask the United States for help in order to protect the safety of that country's merchant ships. It should be recalled that Kuwait was one of those countries who had already given the green light to the presence of U.S. forces in the region.

At the same time, a number of U.S. officials also made statements. For instance, United States' Defense Minister Caspar Weinberger said that his country will not refrain from any action in order to safeguard the security of the Hormuz waterways. Other officials, repeating these statements, have expressed their anxiety regarding this matter.

However, it seems that the United States' attempts to regain its lost prestige are as comical and hasty as its former action; and the confusion among the high-ranking political figures of that country has not yet provided them with an opportunity to make proper plans for the future. It is quite clear that none of these attempts nor extensive propaganda have met with a considerable welcome in the region.

In view of these factors and also due to the confusion that exists among high-ranking political figures in the United States, political circles do not reject the probability that the United States might resort to adventurism and the creation of tension in the region to prove the sincerity of its claims. Although those observers do not believe that such an action is very likely, they have, nevertheless, started examining the dangerous consequences of such actions. Under present conditions it is unlikely that the United States can afford another disgrace resulting from an aimless and failed clash in the Persian Gulf region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has the longest coastline in the Persian Gulf, is entitled to take charge of security in the region. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran is entitled to make use of its extensive capabilities to deliver blows on an intenational scale to those elements that disturb that security.

Khamene'i Addresses Armed Forces in Khorasan

LD251220 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] A Central News Unit correspondent in Mashhad has sent us a report on the speech by President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, to the gathering of Armed Forces personnel from Khorasan Province. We would like to draw your attention to this report:

This morning President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, gave a speech at the joint morning ceremony of the Armed Forces of Khorasan Province which was held at the barracks of the 77th Samen al-A'emmah Division. In his speech he stressed the following: This year we officials still insist on our decision to inflict crushing and effective blows on the Iraqi regime as we did before. Despite the wishes of world arrogance, we shall deliver these blows. We will immobilize

Iraq's war machine and with God's grace, assistance, and help we will wipe the 'Aflaqi Saddam and the dying Iraqi regime off the political scene.

At these ceremonies, after chanting the Islamic Republic song and unfurling the flag of the Islamic Republic, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council first inspected the forces stationed at the barracks and then prayers were said. Then Mr Khamene'i delivered his speech.

Expressing New Year greetings to all the Armed Forces personnel, he expressed his hope that this year the heroic forces of monotheism will, like last year, deliver crushing and fateful blows to the enemies of Islam. Emphasizing the need for greater unity among the Armed Forces, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council referred to the popularity of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic and the self-sacrifice and devotion of all the forces in the course of the war and he praised the martyrs of 77th Samen al-A'emmah Division.

In another part of his speech, Khamene'i said: The revolutionary Armed Forces are made up of believing and self-sacrificing individuals who have sincerely placed their expertise, capability, and military experience at the disposal of the war and this nation. Alongside the Armed Forces there is the Guards Corps which has taken shape and come into existence based on the ideology and doctrines of the revolution. Together they constitute a powerful and complete whole for defending the holy sanctities of Islam. Behind the Armed Forces and revolutionary forces of Islam there is the great force of popular mobilization who with their lives and all that they possess are on the battle-fronts defending the revolution and the Islamic homeland.

Later in his speech, he emphasized the need for greater activity for self-sufficiency in the Armed Forces and described repairing, protecting, and constructing vital equipment as the sacred duty of the Armed Forces. He then added: Today, when many resources have been mobilized to make the country independent, it is also the Armed Forces' duty to attach greater importance to self-sufficiency. The Armed Forces and all the forces, units, divisions, and regions in the country should take the struggle for self-sufficiency seriously and should take steps toward self-sufficiency.

After the president's speech, the Armed Forces stationed in the square marched passed the Holy Koran, the portrait of the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, and the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council.

Addresses Qa'en Residents

LD241800 Tehran IRNA in English 1716 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Qa'en, Khorasan Prov., March 24, IRNA — President 'Ali Khamene'i said here Tuesday that the Islamic Revolution of Iran has brought under question the America's much vaunted global leadership role and that it has created steadily widening cracks in the very political fabric of American society.

Speaking to a group of local people, President Khamene'i stressed that the Islamic Republic is a popular government and that after the war the government should do everything possible to improve the quality of life in deprived regions of the country.

Hoj. Khamene'i who is also head of the Supreme Defence Council (SDC) emphasised that the problems of underdevelopment or none-at-all inherited from the deposed shah's regime should be eliminated through hard work.

Pointing to a foreign daily having said that Iran does not need an all-out attack for final victory over Iraq, the president said, "This indicates that the situation of the Baghdad government is hopeless and is a confirmation that Islamic Iran enjoys independence and stability in the region."

Iran owes its victories and stability to the leader of the Islamic (?Revolution), founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeyni and also the firm backing of the nation, who he lauded for their ardent faith.

The SDC head also expressed hope that Iran's stability [word indistinct] continue to increase daily.

The president left here for Mashhad after a two-day visit to Birjand [words indistinct]

Interior Minister Returns From War Fronts

LD242109 Tehran IRNA in English 1719 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Bakhtaran, March 24, IRNA — Minister of Interior Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi ended a five-day visit to the war fronts, Iraqi refugee camps, and regions bombarded by Iraqi warplanes in the provinces of Ilam and Bakhtaran and left here on Tuesday.

The minister toured damaged sites of the city of Eslamabad-e Gharb hit in Iraqi air and missile attacks 61 times last winter.

Thousands of innocent civilians have been martyred and wounded in Iraqi missile and air attacks since the outbreak of the war in 1980.

Before his departure, Hoj. Mohtashemi explained the objectives of his five-day visit to Bakhtaran and Ilam in a televised press conference in which he said that the purpose was to familiarize himself with issues and problems of the two provinces.

Mohtashemi said that another goal of his visit was to visit Iran's borders areas.

Allegations of Shelling Basra Called 'Mere Lies'

LD251128 Tehran IRNA in English 0955 GMT 25 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 31, IRNA — A spokesman for the War Information Headquarters [WIH] Tuesday categorically denied Iraqi allegations that it shelled Iraqi port city of Basra Monday.

The WIH spokesman described these Iraqi claims as "mere lies" adding that the Muslim combatants of Iran had not shelled the Iraqi city.

The spokesman said the Baghdad regime, through these allegations, was seeking new pretexts to embark on new mischievous acts.

He stressed that the Muslim combatants of Iran were powerfully prepared to respond to any enemy act of mischief.

AFP Reports 'Nuclear Matter' Stockpiled

AU241731 Paris AFP in English 1725 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Geneva, March 24 (AFP) — "Nuclear matter," under control of the International Atomic Energy Agency, was recently stockpiled by Iran on the site of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, announced 'Ali Soltanieh, [spelling as received] head of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations Conference on Peaceful Atomic Use Tuesday in Geneva.

"We gave advanced warning to the IAEC [as received] in Vienna and furnish a confidential description of the nature of these materials," Mr Soltanieh added.

According to Mr Soltanieh, "The conference must take all necessary steps to prevent a military strike against this target, which could provoke the same radioactive consequences as the accident in the Soviet nuclear power plant at Chernobyl."

Mr Soltanieh also elaborated on four previous attacks against the Bushehr plant, one on March 24, 1984, two on February 12, 1985, and one on July 12, 1986.

Construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant began before the Islamic Revolution under the auspices of the West German firm KWU. The plant was to have had two water pressurized reactors of 1200 mw each. It never was finished. One reactor is 80-percent complete.